A LETTER

TO THE

Wm W. Patton.

CLERGY OF VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

AND TO THE

SLAVE-HOLDING PLANTERS,

IN THE

SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BY THOMAS CLARKSON.

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A LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN, MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST!

I ADDRESS myself to you, first, because you are the professed teachers of the people among whom you live, —because they, the people, look up to you as lights set upon a hill for religious instruction and example—and because your opinions and conduct, must have great weight in giving a tone to morals in the different congregations over which you preside. I must now inform you, that for fifty-six years I have entertained an *unceasing hostility against slavery*, and that I have acted accordingly, and this in the most public manner. It may be supposed, therefore, that in thus addressing myself to you, I should not use the most courteous language; but be assured, that though I shall speak to you with a becoming boldness, I shall studiously avoid, as far as I can, everything which would hurt your feelings; and if I should be betrayed into the use of words, apparently harsh on this occasion, through an excessive warmth of feeling on the subject, I do not intend to be unkind to individuals themselves, but to express my abhorrence of the opinions which they hold.

I am told, that some of you, when you first went to your respective congregations, undertook the charge with an honest indignation against slavery, and with a *conviction of its sinfulness*, but that you afterwards changed your sentiments; that you had at length the hardihood to preach in favour of what you had denominated *sinful* before; that many of your profession became *owners of slaves*; and

it grieves me to say, that you whipped and treated them as severely as others; but O, monstrous profaneness! (I can find no gentler word) that some of your *churches* held, in a congregational capacity, *property in the bodies of men, women, and children.* And here I may observe, that under such circumstances, I am compelled to address you as slave-holders, as well as ministers of the Gospel. Our blessed Lord, when he was in his own church (the temple) overthrew the tables of the money-changers there, and the seats of them that sold doves, because they had polluted the sacredness of the place by the *impure spirit* of worldly gain; saying, at the same time, "It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves," Matt. xxi. 12, 13. What would he have said, had he come into your churches (his own too by name only) polluted by the same base spirit, and by sermons delivered against the poor and helpless, and in favour of oppression. Would he not in the same manner, as he is described to have overthrown these tables of the money-changers, have removed you from your pulpits, with some suitable exclamation. In vain would you have replied to him as the false teachers did, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (preached) in thy name," he would have said to you, as he did to them, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Now to such persons as you have proved yourselves to be, and *not to the amiable* ministers of churches in the United States, who steer clear of slavery, or condemn it in their discourses, I address this letter.

And, first, I would ask you, how came you to change your sentiments on this most important of all subjects? Was it for the love of God? No; that is impossible. Was it that your motive could in the remotest degree be

connected with anything honourable, or amiable, or good! No; that is equally impossible. I will tell you at once without waiting for your answer. When you first went to your congregations, your hearts were properly affected, and you disapproved of slavery. You began to let your opinions on it be known. You talked against it, and I dare say, very delicately at first, through a fear of offending. At length you preached against it; but you were given to understand, after a certain time, that such conduct on your part would not do, where all your congregation were slaveholders; and at last, that you must look out, if you did not change your opinions on this subject, for another place in which to preach. Thus the matter assumed a very serious aspect. It now became a question with you of *your future livelihood*. I acknowledge the case to have been a very hard one, and to have been a serious trial to flesh and blood. You unhappily, at length, yielded up your conscience *to mammon*, forgetting the text upon which, perhaps, *you have often preached*, for "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul," Mark viii. 36. Gentlemen, you are now in a *very awful* situation respecting your future and eternal prospects. I really feel for you, and you are worse off in this respect than others, because you *once knew the gospel*, and your *sin* is, therefore, the *greater* in having rejected it. Jesus Christ says, according to St. John, "if I had not come and spoken to them (the Jews) they *had not had sin*, but now they have no cloak for their sin," John xv. 22. Again, you are worse off than others, because as ministers of the gospel, having once known the way of righteousness, but having now deserted it, your *repentance* is *the more difficult*. You know, you know well, what St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews says concerning back-

sliders, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," Hebrews vi. 4, 5, 6. Is it not well known to you also, that St. Peter (2 Epis. ii. 20—21) speaks nearly to the same effect, concerning the same persons, "for if, after they escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them."

But not only is your *sin greater*, and your *repentance* and turning again to God *more difficult*, but the *punishment of the sin* will be in proportion to *your former knowledge* of the Divine will. Our Saviour says this in language so plain, as not to be misunderstood. "Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes; but I say unto you, it shall be *more tolerable* for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you," Matt. xi. 21. Bethsaida and Chorazin had had the gospel preached to them by our Lord himself, but Tyre and Sidon had no such advantage, and were then heathens; and as I have had occasion to mention Tyre, I cannot help saying to you who live in a slave-holding country, (though as ministers of the gospel, you cannot be ignorant of the fact,) that this great city, the greatest in the then known

world, except Babylon, was utterly destroyed, as was prophesied, and has been a poor fishing village ever since, principally *on account of its great traffic in slaves*. This was the main charge brought by the prophet Joel against it, "and they have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink." "The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things," Joel iii. 3, 6. O, gentlemen, may you and your land be preserved by *timely repentance*, from such an afflicting calamity as that just mentioned. God's judgments are often deferred for a time, for reasons known only to himself; but they are nevertheless, sure and certain at last. It is impossible that he can suffer such *monstrous*, such *unparalleled wickedness*, as I take slavery and the slave-trade to be, *to go finally unpunished.*

I fear, gentlemen, that living in a land where the cruelties of slavery are daily practised, and conversing daily with slave-holders, (for you have no other companions) you have gradually adopted their sentiments on this subject, so as to have been actually brought to believe at last, that there *is no sin in slavery*. I well remember that the witnesses who were examined by the British parliament, in the years 1789, 1790, and 1791, when the great subject of the slave-trade was before them, *all confessed* that when they first went to reside in the West Indies, they could not bear their own feelings, on account of the severities which they saw exercised there, in the persons of the unfortunate slaves, but that beholding these spectacles daily, and conversing with overseers and others, they became more reconciled to the system, and could at length bear to see *with indifference*, all those scenes renewed, at the first sight of which they

were so *much shocked*. I fear, gentlemen, I repeat, that this is the case with you; that you have become gradually more hardened, and that you are not the men you once were. Indeed, I have been informed, that you make no scruple to declare, both in private and in public, and even in your pulpits, that the practice of slavery is *no sin*. But if you cannot see sin in the monstrous oppression of your fellow-creatures, which is going on daily before your eyes, *I do not see where sin is to be found at all*, or that you can impute to it any actions of men, however gross, and injurious. Perhaps, your ideas of sin may be very different from mine. We ought, therefore, to understand each other on this subject. My notion of sin is, that "it is a *transgression of the law of God*." The Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, give this definition of it. We should none of us have known of ourselves what constituted sin, unless God had pointed it out to us. He has given us through Moses, the moral laws of the ten commandments, in which are laid down certain prohibitions concerning it, and he has given us through Jesus Christ, and his apostles, certain denunciations against certain actions or ways of men, which *excluded from eternal life*. We see, therefore, in these prohibitions, and in these denunciations, what was intended to be sin in the sight of God, so that the breach of *any one of these* is actually *sinful*, and will bring down his wrath upon us. Do you agree with me in the representations now made to you? Do you allow that any *one transgression* of the Divine commandments, which are solely of a moral nature, is sin? I have *no other standard* upon which I shall attempt to argue the case. If you do, (and you cannot do otherwise as ministers of the gospel) I shall have no difficulty in proving to you, that slavery is *a sin of the deepest dye*.

To do this, in what I conceive to be the most effectual way, I shall go to the root at once, and I shall examine what *lawful* right you have to the liberty of the child who is born of slave-parents; and please to remember, that you have now no slaves, or scarcely any in the United States, but of this description, the African stocks being extinct, or nearly so, and the present system of recruiting the plantations with labourers, being that of breeding. The answer to this question of lawful rights will of course be applicable to all your slaves, as well to full-grown persons as to infants, to all in fact, who are held in bondage as slaves in your land. And, first, I must observe, that there were four sources of slavery among the ancients, and only four, which were acknowledged to be just; the fifth, that of kidnapping or man-stealing, being reprobated by every one who had the least pretensions to honesty. I shall now explain what these sources were, and see how far they are applicable to your case. The first source of slavery is derived from the right of conquest. It was said in defence of it in ancient times, that by sparing the life of a prisoner taken in war, you had a right to his *services*. It was an *exchange of his life for his services*, which life could have been taken away by the conqueror, if it had pleased him. But this cannot apply to your infants, who were never prisoners of war. It has been said again, that a criminal, a robber, or a murderer, forfeits his liberty to the state when convicted, and that every nation has a right to punish criminals in its own way. Some states have sentenced these to exile or slavery, and slavery is therefore but the *execution* of a *just sentence*. But this, again, does not apply to you. The infant, whose liberty is taken, is not a convict, nor has he ever injured his reputed master, or any other person. There was another source of slavery, which existed from time almost immemorial, which was *debt*. The

debtor was sold to the creditor, or some other person, for the payment of debts incurred, if he could not otherwise discharge them. But neither does this cause of slavery belong to your children, so that out of four ways by which men were brought into this frightful situation, you cannot avail yourselves of three of them for your defence.

We come now to the fourth, which was *by birth*. I acknowledge this to comprehend your case. You take the children into slavery, because the mother who bore them *was a slave*. This was certainly the custom all over the world, as far as history goes in ancient times; but there was *no law* for it till the time of the Emperor Justinian, who on looking over the laws and customs of the Roman people, with a view to a revision of them, brought *this custom* into *a law*. This law was contained in a very few words, "partus sequitur ventrem," which being literally translated is, "the birth follows, or is determined by the womb;" or, the child who is born follows the condition of the mother, so that if the mother be free, the child shall be free also; but if the mother be a slave, the child was to be a slave.* You will see, gentlemen, as far as this account goes, that you have no right whatever to hold the children of slaves in bondage, contrary to all *reason*, and *contrary to all justice*, but the right which is founded upon *custom*—custom too which originated in the most barbarous ages of early times, when men *had all gone off into idolatry*, and were then actually *heathens*.

But let us now see upon what principle this custom or law was built. It was built wholly on the principle of the

* There is no law in the Statute books either of England or in the original charter of American Independence, by which slavery is recognized in any shape, though hundreds of thousands of our fellow-creatures have been held in bondage both in the West Indies and in the United States. All slave-holders hold their right to the children of their slaves by this *one law of Justinian only*, which had no better foundation than custom.

laws of property. Now property was, as it is at the present day, of two kinds, either *dead* or *living*. The former consisted as it does now, of lands, houses, goods and chattels, specie, and many other things which men might happen to possess. Living property consisted in horses, mules, oxen, sheep, birds, fish, and other animals, which they called their own. The owner, therefore, of a cow was entitled to the calf, because the cow was his own property. In like manner, the owner of the mare, ewe, or goat, became the owner of the foal, lamb, or kid, which these several animals produced; and thence it followed that the mother of the child being a slave, that is, being *property herself*, the child was considered to be *property* also, and the property of him who owned the mother. It was upon this principle, that the law of "partus sequitur ventrem," as well as the custom now mentioned was founded. No other reason can be given, or even imagined, for such a disposition of things. It followed, therefore, that the mother and her child were both ranked *as cattle*, and that, therefore, they followed the laws of property *as cattle;* but this child in process of time grew up and turned out, not to be a horse, or a bullock, but a *real man*, and a man of the same figure and shape as a *real man;* of the same passions; of the same feelings; of the same propensities to pleasure, and aversion from pain; capable of speaking a language; capable of thinking; of the same intellect; and with an immortal soul. It appears, then, that the children of these slaves belonged to the *human race*. To prove, then, your title, gentlemen, to the children of your slaves under this law, it is *incumbent upon you*, absolutely incumbent upon you, to show that *they are not men*. This you cannot do. You yourselves know that they have the intellects of men. You benumb and deaden their faculties by your cruel usage of them, and

then you say, that they are *inferior beings*. But educate them, and see whether they will not make as quick a progress in learning as others. You have only to go to New York, and other places in your own United States, where there are schools for negro children, to know that what I have just said is true. The children of black people, also, in all the schools of our West India islands establish abundantly the same fact. I remember well, that in my early days, when I was first seeking information on this great subject, the Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a slave-girl, and the Letters of Ignatius Sancho, whose father had been a slave, were well thought of as compositions, but particularly the latter, and these admired even in polite circles. I remember, too, that the celebrated Abbè Gregoriè had made a collection, (unfortunately never published) of above a hundred black persons, natives of Africa, all recorded in history, who had distinguished themselves by their learning, and in the arts and sciences. But you will allow, that the black children do well enough in common schools, and in common learning; but where is the mathematician, where is the diplomatist to be found, who can govern, or carry on the political concerns between state and state? But have they been tried in these high departments? Yes! There is at this moment a young African of the Ashantee country, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Balaam, of Clapham Common, who has been with him nearly a year; and though *some months* of this time were lost in making the one to understand the other, for want of knowing each other's language, yet this youth has made himself master of quadratic equations, and promises fair to make as great a proficiency in the mathematics, as any other promising young man in England, who studies in that difficult department. And as to diplomatic characters, have you

not had specimens of such, close to your own doors. What shall I say of the genius and talents of Henry Christophe, formerly king of a part of Hayti, the son of a slave, and of a complexion as black as jet. I corresponded with him for three years, and therefore knew him well. He devised, when king, a noble plan for the education of every child that was born in his own dominions, and he carried it into execution. He founded a university, and introduced into it the professors of Latin and Greek, and of the mathematics, as well as of sculpture and painting, and of some of the other arts and sciences. He had devised also a liberal and well digested plan of government for his people, but his premature death hindered it from being brought forward. When I was at the Congress of sovereigns at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1817, I happened to have one of his letters in my pocket, and I showed it to the Emperor Alexander of Russia. He was so struck with it, as to have shown it by my permission, to the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, who attended this Congress; and the opinion of all the three upon this letter was, that *none of them* had in their *respective cabinets* a minister, who could write upon the same subject *a better political letter*, or one better suited to the case. May I be permitted to say without giving you the least offence, that you never had *among all your American presidents* a man of *greater genius* and *talents*, or of a *more acute*, *penetrating*, and *capacious mind*, than the black man now mentioned, though undoubtedly these must have had a better knowledge of the world.*

* After the death of Henry Christophe, his widow and two grown-up daughters were at my house for five months, during which time I had an opportunity of judging of their capacity and acquirements. Their acquaintance with history, literature, and the fine arts, and their powers of conversation, qualified them for mixing with the highest circles of English society, and they did afterwards mix with them in London, and were accounted as amiable and as intellectual as others in whose company they were.

But to return to the subject, I have shewn you that three out of the four sources of slavery which were reputed to be *just* sources by the ancients, *do not belong to your case;* and that the fourth, which is applicable to you, is only applicable to you for *your condemnation,* unless you can show that the children of your slaves are of a *different species* from yourselves, or that they are *cattle,* and *not men.* Now St. Paul puts an *end to all controversy* on this subject, by deciding it for us, when he declares " that God has, made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth," Acts xvii. 26. You have, therefore, no ground when you appeal to Justinian, or ancient customs, nor can you invent any other ground which has even a semblance of equity or reason in it for *holding them in slavery.* Revelation rises up against you. And here give me leave to say, that *you* of all people upon earth are the *least excusable* for continuing this barbarous practice, because by your great charter of Independence, by which you exist as an independent nation, you declare that all men are created equal, and are endued by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. O, shameful perversion of your own laws! What ingratitude to God for the blessings you have enjoyed under such a constitution! to use your own liberty for the oppression of the innocent, and of those who cannot help themselves! Gentlemen, be assured, that these outrages upon human nature will not be passed over; a time will come when a voice from heaven, " give an account of thy stewardship," (Luke xvi. 2,) will strike your astonished ears. What will you say to this? You and your slave-holding friends have taken innocent children, of whom Jesus Christ has said, Matt. xix. 14, " of such is the kingdom of God," and consigned them to slavery like

brute beasts. You will not only be called to an account for the cruel treatment of these, but for the *debasement of their faculties.* How many of them, if it had not been for you, would have become useful members of society, how many an ornament to it, how many might have been the instruments of spreading evangelical truths, and how many might have been instruments for God's glory.

Having now shown that neither you, nor your friends the slave-holders, have any right to your slaves as property, either by custom, or by Justinian's law, which was grounded upon it, (provided your slaves are not the descendants of cattle, but of the race of men) or by your own charter of Independence, I come to a very serious and awful part of the subject; that is, I am to prove to you that you are *guilty of sin* in holding them in bondage, or that *slavery is sin* in the sight of God, and of the *deepest dye*, notwithstanding your assertions to the contrary. Slavery, or the *depriving a man of his liberty against his will*, and by force, and obliging him to work *without compensation*, is *theft* or *robbery*, and of the very *worst* or *most aggravated* kind, inasmuch as *human liberty* is more precious to a man than any other of his possessions; and this definition of slavery, which cannot be questioned, applies to *infants*, as well as to *full grown men.* God gave out among his other commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai "*thou shalt not steal*," that is, not *rob* or *commit rapine* of any kind. The introduction of this law was essentially necessary, and it was necessary that it should come from God to make it binding, otherwise society (if men had all been left to rob one another) would have gone to pieces. This law applies to every thing a man has that is stealable—to *his liberty* as well as to any *other of his possessions.* We, in this country, who have never (thank God) been accustomed to see

slavery, usually apply theft or robbery to the taking away, against our will and by force, that which we call our own, which we can see or handle, such as goods, and chattels, horses, carriages, cattle, and other things; but seldom think of a robbery of human liberty, which liberty is only a name for a thing and not visible. But is not liberty as *much our property* as our *goods* and *chattels*, our *sheep* or *cattle?* Yes, and dearer to us too, which we should soon find out by the loss of it. Moses says, "thou shalt not steal," which law relates to every thing that a man may possess, and, therefore, the theft of anything that a man possesses is a *transgression of a divine law*, and *therefore sin.* But this law is made, both by Moses and St. Paul, to extend to a *man's liberty*, as well as to his goods and chattels, and makes the theft of a *much more heinous sort*, and, therefore, a sin of a *deeper dye*, and in this awful light both of them viewed the act. It was so much more flagrant than common theft, "*to deprive a man of his liberty for ever*," that Moses punished it with *death*, and put this crime (as far as the punishment of it was concerned) on a footing with murder, for to kill a man outright or at once, was a more merciful act than keeping him in bondage, with all its whips and torments for ever; and "he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death," Exod. xxi. 16. And here you will see, gentlemen, that Moses shows his sense of the enormity of this offence, and his abhorrence of it, by adding, that in whosoever hands the stolen man should be found, he also should be put to death; that is, if the man stealer sold him to another man, this other man who bought him should die also. The apostle Paul, also, viewed the sin in the same awful light, when he said, "knowing that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless, and disobe-

dient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, 1 Timothy i. 9, 10, he there adds to the catalogue, "*man-stealers*," and others; whom, in 1 Corinthians vi. 9, he classes with the *unrighteous*, and those who are *not to inherit eternal life*.

But you may say, that this law of Moses applies not to the *children of slaves*, but to grown up people, who were before free, for the former go quietly into slavery, and moreover, were the children of slave-mothers. I answer, that this law of God by Moses, makes no exceptions whatever, *as to persons*. "Thou shalt not steal," comprehends *every thief* and every thing that is *stolen*, of what sort soever it may be. I shall, therefore, enter a little further into this subject, and endeavour to convince you by a *suitable comparison*, that you are a little out of your reckoning, if you maintain that the seventh commandment does not take within its scope, the children of slaves.

Men-stealers, or robbers of human liberty in ancient times, are mentioned by Homer, Xenophon, and other writers. These generally went out in *marauding parties*, —some by sea, others by land—and lay in ambush, and seized all who came in their way; and what did they do with their captives? They either carried them into markets, such as Egypt, Cyprus and other places, and sold them, or made them labour for themselves, without any compensation during their natural lives. During all this time, their bodies were *not their own*, their *will* was not *their own*, they were *made to obey* the commands of their captors, or to *be punished* at their discretion. Now were these pirates the robbers of human liberty or not? Were these the persons who incurred the reprobation and condemnation of Paul and Moses? You must confess that they were. But if

these marauders were *robbers*, so are *your slave-holders* with respect to the children of slaves. The *treatment* and the *effects* under the two systems, were *the same*. You take these children without their *consent*, and *sell* them, or *make them work* by the whip and *without wages*, and for *your own advantage* only, and as you please. As in the former case, *neither their will* nor *their bodies* are *their own*. Yes, I may go so far as to say, that you take them not *without*, but *against* their *own consent;* for you take them *against the consent of their parents*, who are their natural guardians, and who consider liberty as the greatest boon that can be conferred upon them, and you *sentence* them to *slavery*, as *soon as they* are *born*, that is, *before they can speak* and declare their will; and when they are old enough to be sent to the plantations, *no choice* is given them, and they are forced from that time, by the whip to work, though they would *give all they have in the world*, to exchange their condition. Here, then, the two descriptions of persons are *treated alike*, are *subjected alike* to arbitrary will, and are *alike slaves*. Where, then, is the difference between this system of the marauders and yours? You will say there is a difference. We do not go out, or lie in ambush to catch them. We take them out of the huts or hovels of their parents quietly, and at home. We *give only a quiet order* for them to go into the plantations, and this order is obeyed. What nonsense, or rather effrontery is this answer? The old marauders *did exactly the same thing*, and the result was the same, namely—*slavery*. The captain of the marauding vessel *gave an order* to his crew to embark, and they embarked, and what was the result? *Slavery*. The captain of the marauding gang, whose piracy was to be by land, gave *an order* to his ruffians to sally forth, and they sallied forth, and what was the result?—*Slavery*. Your slave-holders give *a quiet order* to their

overseers, that such and such children should be sent for the first time into the fields to work, and the order is obeyed, and what is the result? *Slavery.* Here, then, gentlemen, the *intention* and the *effects* are the same. It is your *intention*, and so it was the *intention* of *the marauders* with respect to their victims, that these children should be *slaves*, and they are thereby *enslaved.* But it is the *intention* that *constitutes the crime*, and you are therefore as much guilty of *theft* and *robbery*, in its worst sense, as these marauders were. Nor is it any excuse for you, to say that these children were born of slave-mothers, for neither is the mother, nor is the child, nor *is any slave* on your estates, your *property*, if Moses and Paul be right, and if they acted under the inspiration of God; for the seventh commandment, "thou shalt not steal," is made by them, as I said before to comprehend the *theft of human liberty* as much as the *theft of any other thing* which a man may possess; and, therefore, to *deprive* a man, or a woman, or a child, of their liberties, by *any forcible means whatever*, except they have forfeited it by crime, is *theft nearly equal to murder itself*, and calls for the severest punishment from Almighty God on the offender. Perhaps, gentlemen, you may have become so familiar with slavery as to think that the *simple transgression* of *only a single law of God*, is of no consequence. If you think so, what has your familiarity with lavery, done or gained for you? It has done you a mischief not easily to be repaired; it has made an inroad upon the purity of your minds; it has seared your consciences; it has driven you to a judicial blindness. If you think so, I heartily pity you, and hope that your lives may be spared, so as to enable you to *repent.*

I have been long, and perhaps tedious, in trying to convince you that slavery is *awfully sinful.* We have seen it

to be sin, inasmuch as *theft* or *robbery* is its *source*, and I shall now attempt to show you that it is sin again in its *effects*. *Arbitrary power*, connected as it is with the infirmities of our nature, has a natural tendency to produce crime. It gives frequently birth to the bad passions, and the power of indulging them to extremes. Shall I say that adultery, the bearing of false witness against our neighbour, and even murder, follow theft or robbery, and thus *three other* of the ten commandments are broken. For instance, a slave-woman attracts the notice, and excites the lust of the master or overseer. A man so situated can gratify his desires by force, and against the woman's will, and without any control by the civil magistracy, and thus plunge himself into the crime of *rape* or *adultery*, as it happens that she is married or not. *Thousands* and *tens of thousands* of instances of this sort take place every year, among the poor slave-women of your own, and of every slave-holding country in the world.

Again, many of the poor slaves in our West Indian colonies, before emancipation took place, were accustomed to be brought by different overseers, before justices of the peace, to answer charges of various kinds then brought against them. I have been assured by persons present at these examinations, that nothing could exceed the *apparent malice* displayed by some of the overseers on these occasions, and that they were guilty of the grossest exaggeration in their testimony, to prove delinquency on the part of the poor slave, to whom they had an *evident dislike or hatred*, perhaps, for some prior indignant frown, or some prior indignant expression, shown in the moment of excessive provocation, which they, the overseers interpreted, of their own arbitrary will to be *sauciness*, and a *public contempt of themselves* and their authority; and some of these came forward even *with lies*, though upon *oath* to effect their

purpose, thus breaking the ninth commandment by *false swearing*, which says, "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." What opportunities have these petty trials afforded for the gratification of *malice* and *revenge*. These cases of appeal and exaggerated testimony were not solitary, but of *every day's occurrence*, except on Sunday in our colonies, before emancipation took place; and they now occur *daily* in all slave countries, and no doubt in yours also, unless an appeal to the civil magistrate is forbidden, and the *arbitrary will* of the oppressor is *law*.

Again, perhaps, a poor slave offends his master by real negligence or disobedience, so that the master becomes irritated. In this case, there is no saying with what punishment the offence may be visited, or where it may end. It depends wholly on the will of the master. There is no law to restrain him. The poor slave may be subjected to the whip, the chain, the dungeon, the iron collar with its frightful spikes, or any instrument of torture which he may think proper even to invent. Nay, he may, if the master pleases, be punished with these instruments till *he dies;* and how *many thousand murders of this kind*, under the head of lawful punishment, have been committed in the United States, and *without any punishment of the murderer at all.* These murders are frequently committed on the plantations in the dungeons, and locked-up places, and by gaolers who need not suffer the victims to be seen, nor dare they tell the tale out of doors. Thus the matter is hushed up, but if through any circumstance, the matter should transpire, and in one case in a thousand, if a jury should be summoned, this makes no difference to the criminal with a jury of *slave-holders*, and the *murderer is sure to escape*. And yet, gentlemen, you say that you *cannot see any sin in slavery*. Where then are you to see it, as I said at the beginning of this little

tract, if you do not see it there? It seems to me, as if your acquaintance with slavery had totally blinded your eyes, and left you without the power of seeing, and judging for yourselves. Why,—*slavery is full of sin.* You can view it in, no aspect where its *sinfulness does not appear.* It is sin in its *source.* It is sin in its *effects.* It may lead, and it does lead, (and you yourselves know it, and none better by experience) that it leads to *rape*, *adultery*, *false witness* against your neighbour, and *very frequently to murder.* Add to these crimes *theft*, (though rape is included in theft) and it leads to the violation of no less than four out of the ten commandments of the moral law. It is *sin* in its *root*, *sin* in its *branches*, and sin in its *fruit*, and yet living where all these evil practices are going on, you can see no evil or sin in slavery. May God of his mercy, provided the day of your visitation be not over, grant you to see slavery *in its true light*, "before your houses are left unto you desolate," Matt. xxiii. 38.

And now, gentlemen, I am going to address you on a different branch of the subject, and in a manner somewhat different from that before. I feel it my duty to *warn you*, if you be honourable men, that you ought to *withdraw yourselves* from the *sacred office of ministers* of the gospel of Christ, since your doctrines, as they relate to slavery, are *at variance* with the *revealed word of God.* You are doing no good, with your present sentiments, to genuine Christianity, but *lowering* the excellence of its standard, and leading your flocks astray.

I am told, gentlemen, that you sit down in your houses quite calm and composed, under the heavy calumny which attaches to you, as if no charges could be brought against you, and under the belief that *you are still Christians*, and that the apostles would have received you as such into their fellowship. An American newspaper was put into my

hands a few days ago, which enables me to say a few words to you on this point. It is dated October 2nd, 1840. It contains a letter signed R. The writer, speaking of ministers of the gospel in the South, quotes from them a declaration resolved upon, at what they call *the convention*, in the following words :—"We believe slave-holding to be perfectly *compatible* with *genuine piety*, and are sure that the apostles would *have received us to their fellowship*." I thank these ministers for this public confession. I thank them for throwing off the mask, and telling us honestly what their opinions are on the subject. I now perfectly understand them. The ministers in the Southern States admit, by this my quotation, that what has been reported to me concerning them is true. They think that slave-holding is *perfectly compatible* with *genuine piety*. This must be, as I have said before, because they think that there *is no sin in slavery*. But if slavery springs from, and if it leads to false-swearing, adultery, rape, and murder, they, these ministers, have this piety in *no common measure*. But how come they to be so sure that the apostles would have received them into their fellowship? How do they know this, that they state it so confidently? I have reason to believe otherwise. Poor deluded men! to think so well of themselves, while labouring under the stigma put upon them by every disinterested Christian, and so badly of the apostles' character, as to suppose that they (the apostles) could *fraternize with them at all*. Suppose that they had lived in St. Paul's time, and been at Rome, or Corinth, or Ephesus, or Philippi, when he was there, and had given out publicly that "the depriving a man of his liberty by force, and against his consent, was compatible with genuine piety," when Paul himself has said that the "man-stealer would not inherit eternal life;" or suppose that they had

given out publicly that "slaves were of an inferior race, and of the brute creation;" when he himself has said also, that "God had made of one blood, all nations of men for to dwell upon all the face of the earth," do you think that he would, or *that he could* have received them into fellowship? No, consistently with *these*, his own declarations, he could have had *nothing to do with them*, but would have classed them, as he did some others, with *the false teachers*, whom he describes thus, "for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Philippians iii. 18, 19. This, and no other, would have been their allotted place. I cannot conceive that any other epithet than that of the *false teacher*, would have been bestowed upon a minister of this description, had he lived in the apostle's time.

But to return, gentlemen, I have just told you, and I now tell you again, that I feel it to be my duty to warn you to *withdraw yourselves* from the *sacred office of ministers of the gospel of Christ*, because you are not acting as honest men towards God, if you make use of the Old and New Testament, that is, of our present common Bible, (his own word) *in the service of slavery*. It is dishonest in you, not to say *blasphemous*, (I wish I could find a softer word to express my feelings) to carry with you your Bibles into your pulpits, and then preach, *as if from them*, doctrines, which *they condemn and reprobate;* thus deceiving your congregations, and giving them false views of the Christian religion. By preaching, as *if from the sacred book*, what it disowns as truth, you are stabbing Christianity insidiously, and thus heaping vengeance on your own heads. You must, therefore, either *relinquish the ministry*, or *change* your *present*

sentiments on slavery, or if you continue to be teachers, you must not call yourselves *ministers of Christ*, and you must print a *new edition of the Bible*, (both of the Old and New Testament) *accommodated to your own views*, and those of your slave-holding friends, and for use in your own churches. There are, perhaps, gentlemen, more than a hundred texts in these sacred volumes, as they have now come into our hands, which with your present sentiments, you can neither *read* to the people, nor *explain* to them. To read them, would be to bring up thoughts which would *smite your own consciences* as slave-holders, and be a *reproach to yourselves*. To explain them faithfully, would be to *condemn your congregations* also, and to *irritate them*, and set them against you. You must therefore, if you continue in the ministry, have an *edition* or *version* of the scriptures of your own, and such as not to offend neither yourselves nor them. It would be very easy to effect this. Take a common Bible as now in use, including the two testaments. Examine the passages in these. If it should appear to you that any of these reprobate you as slave-holders, strike them out with a pen, and thus obliterate them for ever. You may then print a new edition or version, in which all such passages may be left out. You *must* do something of this sort, if you continue in the ministry, for it is dishonest, as I said before, to preach *in favour of slavery*, taking the common Bible with you into your pulpits, and thus making the people believe that you are preaching the word of God. After this alteration in the Bible, you may still continue ministers of a church; but it cannot be of the *church of Christ*. You may call yourselves "moral philosophers of a new school," and your altered book, "a new version of the Bible, accommodated to the views of the slave-holding ministers and planters in the southern parts of the United States." I will now give you a hint, as to what sort of

passages of scripture ought to be erased from the old edition, and therefore not admitted into *the new*.

The first of these passages, gentlemen, is the fourth commandment in the moral law of Moses. "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." By this noble and benevolent law, God set apart one day in the week to be appropriated to rest for the body after the labours of the week, and for refreshment and life to the soul in the worship of Him. But this law is a *dead letter*, and therefore *useless* to your slaves, inasmuch as they are made *to cultivate their provision grounds,* or do other work on the Sunday, and *are never taught* on that day to worship God, nor even, I am grieved to say, to know his name. Ought these things to be? Is not this practice of yours the *transgression of a command* of the Creator, and of a command so generously intended for the best interests of the creature? You must confess it to be so, as ministers of the gospel. This commandment then must be *left out of the new version*, for if introduced there, it would constantly stare you in the face to your *own reproach*, and you cannot read or preach upon it in the house of God, so as to explain it in *its true sense*, where your congregations *consist of slave-holders*, for it would be equally a *sting* and a *reproach to them*. I believe that you will join me in this opinion, and say that your congregations would not bear to hear you on such a point, and that your churches would be broken up, if the doctrine *of rest on the Sabbath* were to be enforced among your slaves. But I say, rather let this be so, than that by the employment of their slaves on the Lord's day, they should violate a law of God, the most important that was ever devised for the temporal, as well as spiritual good of mankind. Had you been faithful ministers matters might never have come to this pass. Have you *solemnly protested continually protested* against this

practice of the planters? If you have not, you have not done your duty, and are chargeable with the sin.

And as the *fourth* commandment is to be left out of *the new version*, you must leave out of it the *sixth*, *seventh*, *eighth*, and *ninth*, for I have already shown that to deprive a man of his liberty by force and against his will, is *theft*, and that slavery, or the arbitrary power which it confers on a man may lead, and does lead in *thousands and tens of thousands of cases*, to the bearing of *false witness*, *adultery*, *rape*, and *murder*. These crimes are of such *common notoriety* with you, that they pass off quite as *common occurrences*. Nobody among you *thinks of them as crimes*, when practised upon others *of a different skin*; and, therefore, it would not only be *useless*, but *offensive* to your congregations to put them into your new version. You can only admit them there by the addition of a note, saying, that God has given you and the planters a *new revelation*, which informs you that these laws of Moses were intended only for *white people*. And here I must beg leave to observe, that some of you may think that these laws were made only for *the Israelites*, as preparatory to their going into the land of Canaan. But to this I reply, that, though the first and second of the ten commandments were peculiarly adapted to this purpose, because the nations of Canaan were then entirely gone off into idolatry, and it was necessary to guard against this evil, they are yet equally adapted to others, namely, those who were then and are now in a heathen state. With respect to the *rest of them*, they are all of a *moral nature*, and binding *upon all mankind*. There were people in Paul's time, who thought, that the introduction of the doctrine of *faith in Christ* by him, as the great source of salvation, *superseded the moral law*; but Paul took particular pains to tell them otherwise, in these

words, which included both the question and the answer, "Do we then make *void* the law *through faith?* God forbid; yea, we *establish the law*," Romans iii. 31. Thus, gentlemen, on account of the evil practices which have been introduced into your land in consequence of slavery, namely, by Sabbath breaking, rape, adultery, and the crimes that have been just mentioned, no less than *five* out of the *ten* commandments, or *one-half of the moral law* have been abolished by you.

There are many other passages of the Old Testament, which *cannot be admitted into your new version*, because the recital of them by any minister in his church would not only be highly *condemnatory* of the wicked conduct of the members of his slave-holding congregations, but be provocative of their anger, and most probably of their abuse. I will mention one or two of them; first, "Woe be to him, who buildeth his house in unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbour's service *without wages*, and giveth him *not for his work*," Jeremiah xxii. 13. Secondly, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to *loose the bonds* of wickedness, to *undo the heavy burdens*, and to *let the oppressed go free*, and that ye *break every yoke*," Isaiah lviii. 6. There are many other passages in the Old Testament, of the same sort, as the first of these just quoted. The *prophets are full of them*. Indeed, there is no subject where they speak with more unanimity, and warmth than on the *injustice* of those *who defraud* their *labourers of their wages*.

And now, gentlemen, I come to the New Testament, to show you that *there* also some of the texts or passages must be *expunged* from our present edition of it, and *left out* in the *new version;* and, I am sorry to say, that one of these, the most beautiful and useful as a rule of life, is of

this description, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets," Matt. vii. 12. The converse of this proposition is true also. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should *not* do unto you, *do ye not* even unto them." This is called the golden rule, on account of its extraordinary value. This rule is such as the wisdom of man could not have invented. It supplies the place of a hundred other rules, because it is useful to us on so many and different occasions. It is so simple too, that the illiterate may understand it, and act upon it. It is *unerring*, as a guide of life, pointing to us what is right, and what is wrong, to do towards our neighbour. We feel it to be just or right in our own hearts. And must this heavenly rule be expunged from the sacred volume, when it ought to be in every book? Yes, it is of *no use* to you, or your slave-holding friends. They *violate it deliberately*, not only every day, *but every hour* of the day *where slavery exists*, though it came from God. Is there a planter who would wish to be a slave? Or rather, is there any planter, who would not think it the heaviest affliction that could befal him in this life, to be a slave? Why then does he do that to another, which he would wish not to be done, and which God says, should not be done, unto himself.

There is another text of our blessed Lord, which is applicable *to all of us*, but it is more particularly suited to *your case*. He quotes it as having come from God himself, "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice," Matt. ix. 13; that is, I prefer humanity, compassion, and the warm and tender feelings of the heart, to any *cold outward show* of religion, even to *sacrifice*, which is in the highest esteem, and considered of the greatest importance among men. "I go," said he,

"to the sick," (ver. 12.) "rather than to those who need no physician." And if Jesus Christ considered *mercy* to be one of the most *noble attributes of God*, so in another place he held out this *attribute* as being to be *imitated upon earth*, "Be ye therefore merciful," says he, "as your Father also is merciful, for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil," Luke vi. 35, 36. Now, gentlemen, where is your *expected mercy* and compassion, and that of your slave-holding friends, (qualities so agreeable to God) when you can whip your slaves, your fellow-creatures, men who have never offended you; put the heavy chain upon them; confine them in dungeons; and wear out their lives by hard labour; and when you can do and see all these things with *a cold indifference?* Where is your mercy, when you can see, as *you daily do*, sales of these unhappy people, like those of beasts of the field, where wives are torn from their husbands, and mothers from their children, to go to distant lands, and never to meet again, and this without any *feeling of shame or remorse?* Can you expect that God should be merciful to you, who have had no mercy upon others? Here, then, is another text to be expelled from your old version.

Another text taken from our Saviour's own mouth, and which is condemnatory of your conduct, so exactly fits you as if it had been made for the very purpose, "What therefore God hath joined together" (alluding to man and wife) "let not man put asunder," Matt. xix. 6. This is another of the passages you must *expel from the old* edition of the Testament, and *leave out in the new version*; for the separation of a man and wife is a sin, which is of *daily occurrence* before your eyes, so that no person can plead ignorance of it. Gentlemen, you know well, that sales of these unhappy people, as of beasts of the field, by which man and wife

are separated for ever, are continually going on (notwithstanding our Saviour's injunction) more or less every day, in some part or other of the southern states of the Union. You yourselves have witnessed the last parting embrace of persons so united, and I am sorry to believe, from habit, *without commiseration or disgust*. Dare you preach from the text which forbids such a separation, in your slave-holding congregations, and explain it in the way our Saviour meant it to be understood? If not, this text is of no use to you or them, as it is found in the sacred volume. Why then let it remain there? I may now mention a circumstance which took place at one of these sales. Two merchants went from New Orleans to a town on the Missouri, to attend a large auction for slaves. One of the slaves, a young man, a blacksmith, of considerable skill in his profession, was sold there, and knocked down by the hammer, to be the property of one of the merchants just mentioned, in consequence of which he was to be conveyed some hundred miles into the country; and as soon as he knew who was to be his new master, he went up to him, and entreated him to buy his wife also, who was then standing among the group, that she might go with him into his exile. The master refused. He went up to him a second time; when he refused again. At length, the bell of the steamer rung for the passengers to go on board, among whom he was to be one. He then went for the last time to his new master, and fell upon his knees, and said that he and his wife had lived affectionately together, and that if he would but buy her also, he would be a faithful slave to him, that he would never run away, but that he would earn him loads of money, which would repay the cost of his wife. The master was still inexorable, and he (the poor slave) was hurried on board, when he desired only to take

leave of his wife. They embraced each other in the most affectionate and earnest manner; and, this being done, he took a razor, which he had concealed, and cut his throat from ear to ear, thus escaping from the horrible dominion of slavery for ever.

Our blessed Saviour on another occasion said to his disciples, "for what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. xvi. 25, 26. This text I have before quoted, but on a different occasion. We collect from it that a man may be striving all his days to get riches or honours, or what he calls this world's goods, and lose his own soul in the pursuit. This would be deemed a woeful exchange indeed, to gain money in this life, which is short, and *eternal* misery in the next. Now this question of our Saviour has a reference to those who are *unduly seeking* the things of this world; and they are seeking them unduly, who seek them in a way, by which their souls may be endangered. He, our Lord himself, does not find fault with the man who was then gaining a plain livelihood by *honest* means, such as by honourable profits in trade or agriculture, but the man who aimed at superfluities in *an unjust or wicked way*. Now, what will you slave-holders say to this, all of whose profits arise from the produce of lands which are cultivated by persons *unjustly detained in bondage*, and who are made to work *without wages*, and *whipped*, and *lacerated*, and *tortured* at *discretion*, without the *possibility of redress?* And what will you yourselves say, whose stipends, or salaries, or wages come from such a *polluted source?* All the persons attending your churches are slave-holders. The planters, who are a part of your congregations, pay you out of the *sweat* and *blood of their slaves*. A part of your incomes which arises from

those slaves whom you let out on hire to others as labourers, (belonging as property, O shame! to your churches!) comes from the same *bloody fountain*. The remaining part of it comes from tradesmen and others, who are not only slave-holders themselves, but who have almost all their dealings with slave-holders also. You cannot answer this question put by our blessed Lord, but with *shame* and *confusion* of *face*. I entreat you, therefore, most earnestly to take it into your deepest consideration. Life or death are here offered to you. Life eternal, or death by which you will at least be driven from the presence of God for ever. If you determine after all to persist in renewing such *unjust* gains, the *wickedest* of all the mammon of unrighteousness, you must *expel the text* from the sacred book, as it has hitherto given you its sacred warning *to no purpose*.

Let us now go to another passage in the New Testament, in which you, pastors and ministers, are principally concerned. Our Saviour, when he gave to his apostles the great commission for preaching the gospel, said to them, "Go ye *into all* the world and preach the gospel to *every creature*," Mark xvi. 15. Now who were the people to whom the apostles were to preach the gospel? To *every one* without exception. Now the world consisted at that time of only two descriptions of people in a religious point of view—Jews and heathens—of whom the Jews did not constitute one hundredth part of the population. The heathens, the great bulk of mankind, to whom the gospel was thus ordered to be preached by his ministers, were of *different colours*, black, white, or swarthy, as they lived in the different zones. The gospel was then to be preached to *heathens*, and to *heathens of all colours*, both black and white. Now, gentlemen, the same duty devolves upon you, as ministers of Christ, as devolved upon the apostles. But

you have not to travel, as they had to travel, into distant parts of the world to perform your office. Heathens and black people *lie close* to your *own doors* on the neighbouring estates; and you see them lying *in ignorance, darkness, and superstition*, and yet make no effort to help them. But, perhaps, you may say, "We neglect them only because the planters will not admit us to go upon their estates to do it." If so, you cannot help yourselves. But it is in your power, and it is *your duty*, to make a *public protest in your churches against them*. I have been told by several sensible Americans, that if all the clergy of the United States would religiously set their faces against slavery, so as to be firm against it, both in their conversations and their pulpits, *it could not long survive*. Your protest should be in the language of Peter to the Jewish council, "We ought to obey God rather than man."

But God not only gave his apostles orders to preach the gospel to *every creature*, but warned *every creature* against *rejecting it*." "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John xii. 48. This warning is not specifically directed to the holders of slaves, but may be *brought home* to them in *an especial manner*. These never thought, perhaps, before that for so trifling a thing, as it appears to them to be, as that of rejecting, or setting at nought, such a little book, as that which contains the New Testament, they would be visited at the last day; and that it was a crime which they would have to answer for in the great day of account. But we are told otherwise from authority, which cannot err, that "there is one who judgeth." There are two descriptions of persons to whom this warning extends. The first are, they who refuse to receive, or who throw obstacles in

the way of circulating the gospel; and the last, are they who, though they do not question its authority, go directly contrary to its precepts; and no people are *such delinquents*, or oppose this divine declaration so much, I am sorry to say, in *both cases*, as those now under our consideration. In the first place, they see their slaves in a state of total darkness as to the light which our blessed Lord would have all men to receive. They not only deny their slaves, but shut out from them *deliberately*, and by every means in their power, the *gospel of Christ*. They will not even *allow them to be taught to read*, by which they might come to a knowledge of its contents. This is the more cruel, because the perusal of it might give them consolation in their wretchedness, which nothing else could give; and this is the more inexcusable, because they cannot but know to what a degree of comfort and happiness, the missionaries to different parts of the world have brought those, who were in a similarly debased and miserable condition. But besides simply casting the New Testament away from these poor benighted creatures, they come under the second charge, which is far worse than the first, and show themselves guilty *beyond all others* in the scale of *moral turpitude*. They fly in the face of its precepts, and do diametrically the contrary of what they enjoin. For instance, our blessed Lord said, as I have before mentioned, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," Matt. vii. 12. This sublime injunction is *violated every day*, while they *keep their slaves*, as slaves, against their will, independently of their cruel treatment. He said again, as has been before quoted, "What God hath joined together, let not men put asunder." This command also is *broken every day*, while the markets for human flesh and blood are continued. The apostle James, says, "Go to now ye rich men and weep

and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Behold the *hire* of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, *crieth;* and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth," James v. 1, 4. This denunciation also is *passed over daily*, and with the *greatest indifference*. Why need I say more? Has not enough been said to prove that there cannot be found a more *awful rejection* of the gospel in *any land*. Not only to *refuse it* but *wilfully to shut it out from others;* and *then every day by practice to rise up in rebellion against it*, can only be accounted for by an insanity which is always bent upon wickedness. The text, then, "he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him," &c. must of all others be *struck out* of the *old* and *omitted* in the *new* version.

I proceed now, gentlemen, to three particular passages in the New Testament, which will be of more importance to you, and more worthy of your attention, than any others which I have yet mentioned. I entreat you to give them the most serious consideration, as they relate to what may be your situation in another life. These passages are found in different parts of the New Testsment, but I have placed them so as to follow each other, because they belong to the same subject. The first is, "Give an account of thy stewardship," Luke xvi. 2. You are aware that this searching question will be put to you, and every one of your slave-holding brethren, as well as to others, on the great day of retribution. Remember, that you can neither put off this day, nor this question, and that no excuses will avail, where everything that is secret will be laid open. It is not for me to anticipate what may be your answers. I shall only say, that as your slaves are the children of a common parent, equally with yourselves, they will be equally

the objects of God's care, and their sufferings be equally the objects of redress on this solemn occasion.

It is said again, that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10. Here, then, comes the exposure. A strict examination will follow, with the utmost impartiality, and *without respect of persons*, high or low, rich or poor, black or white. And what shall you and your brethren say to every *individual act of oppression*, which shall then be brought against you, before the righteous Judge of all the earth. Thousands and tens of thousands of *mutilated persons*, formerly your slaves, will be then brought in ghastly array before you, *face to face*, and you cannot run away from the spectacle—exhibiting their *wounds* and *scars*, and telling their different tales of woe and suffering even unto death. But I will not dwell upon this frightful subject. Is it too much to say, that you will be speechless, or if you should be able to raise your voice at all, that you will say "to the mountains cover us, and to the hills, fall upon us," Hosea x. 8.

And, last of all comes the sentence—"and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world," Matt. xxv. 33, 34. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. Now, as it appears from this chapter that there will be but *two sentences* on this solemn occasion, which of them think you, will be yours? Could the supreme Judge of the universe, though one of his brightest attributes is that of mercy, show mercy to you,

who have shown no mercy to others? This would be to change his character of *infinite holiness*, of *infinite justice*, *all the laws* promulgated through his prophets, apostles, and his Son which relate to good and evil, and to make *null and void* his scheme of *future rewards and punishments*, determined upon before the creation of the world; and here I beg leave to observe, while this chapter is in my hand for an authority, that whatever God may think it right to do to you, though always disposed to mercy, yet Jesus Christ has made *charity* or *love to brethren*, which includes charity in its most extended sense, to be *the criterion* for determining salvation in the day of judgment; and, he has made the want of this love or charity, that is, a cold-hearted, cruel want of attention to the sufferings of our fellow-creatures, to be the *criterion* for determining punishment on that day. Indeed, he has made in this chapter, the rewards of heaven to go to those persons, and *to those only*, who have exercised humanity upon earth, and torment to be the fate of those who have not. He does not even give a place to faith* on this occasion. But I must end the subject here: it is perfectly clear from what has been said, that the three quotations last given, cannot be *retained in the old version*, and equally clear that they cannot *be introduced into the new*. You cannot see them with any other feelings than those of horror—you dare not preach upon them, that is, you dare not interpret them faithfully, according to their true meaning, to your congregations. You dare not tell them that a time will come when their mutilated slaves, their brethren, will be brought, and this face to face, as *evidences against* them *before the bar of God*, and that they of the congregations will have

* Faith in Christ could not be mentioned where the whole world were to be assembled for judgment from the *time of Adam*, because myriads must have lived before the time of Christ, who never heard of his name.

to answer for all their cruel and wicked conduct towards them.

There are yet, gentlemen, passages in the New Testament, which crowd upon me, but I think I have produced a sufficient number of them to show, that you cannot use your present version of it, *while you continue your present system of holding slaves.* I will, however, mention a few more, that you may not suppose that more cannot be brought forward to the same effect. The first shall be taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness," Romans i. 18. This verse was levelled at the heathens in St. Paul's time, but is equally true of you. I know only of two meanings, which can be attached to it, and either of these will suit your case. A question here arises, whether the Greek word used in it signifies "hold or retain," or "hinder or restrain." Both are equally good translations of the verb. The verse may then be interpreted in either of these two ways. "The wrath of God is revealed against those heathens, who retained the truth in unrighteousness, that is, by *acting contrary to the light*, which they had, or might have learned from *the law of nature, (their* then *acknowledged guide)* and by suppressing the dictates of their *natural consciences*, or "the wrath of God is revealed against such of their philosophers or teachers, as Socrates, Plato, and others, who knew much more of the divine nature, than they thought it safe or prudent to *discover to the vulgar*, and, therefore, *concealed it;* and who, by such unrighteous conduct, *hindered the truth of God* from *being propagated* in the earth. Now, gentlemen, do you never go against your own consciences, by concealing from your congregations the *whole truth*, as *it is*

in the Bible, by suppressing those passages in it, which show the *iniquity of slave-holding*, and which declare that *they* shall be punished in a future life, who are guilty of cruelty and oppression, and do you not conceal, or withhold the great truths of the gospel from your wretched slaves?

And now to another point. The apostle Paul has a heavy accusation to bring against you, for *disputing his word*. He has said expressly, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth," Acts xvii. 26. Here the apostle maintains that all the men upon the earth in his time, came *from one and the same stock*, and we know that in his time, and long before his time, there were nations of black men, Ethiopians, and the descendants of Cush, (from the latter of whom, the ancestors of your slaves probably sprung) living in different regions of the globe. But you say in so many words, that Paul, as far as this text is concerned, is a *liar*, when you say that your slaves are of an *inferior race*, or of the *brute creation*. This was common language with the speakers at the different meetings, on the formation of your "Colonization Society," and was your language in former times, and has been your language ever since. Who gave you this information, that you should know more on this subject than Paul himself? You cannot then allow this passage to be put into your *new version*, while you consider him as a liar.

There is a verse also in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, (ii. 11.) which, in giving the character of God, will convey, though not intended, a severe reproof to you. The apostle declares, that God will render to every man according to his deeds, for that *there is no respect of persons with God*." Here, then, we have one of his attributes laid

open to us, which is, that, in all his dealings with man, where justice is concerned, he is *no respecter of persons*. But every attribute, which belongs to God, calls upon us for imitation; because the more we endeavour to imitate him, the nearer we approach to his character, and the more we deviate from his brightness, the farther we shall go from the line of perfection. Now, there are *no people* in the world, who afford us *such a disgusting, such a wicked proof of respect to the persons of men*, as you yourselves do in the *persons of* your unfortunate slaves. You mark them as a *separate creation*, and as *brutes of the field*. You mark their very colour with *ignominy*, and hold it out as a *sign of degradation;* when in fact, they are born with genius and talents equal to yourselves. Your motto with them is, "taste not, touch not, handle not," as if they were "the unclean thing;" and these poisonous sentiments have been infused by you, into the inhabitants of your whole land, so that they have spread among those states of the union, which have no connexion with slavery. You will not sit down, you will not shake hands with a black man. Your free servants will not sit down with him, though he be free himself, even in your kitchens. But far worse than all, it is where black men go to your places of worship. They are made to sit there apart, in separate places from the whites, and you call your public services on these occasions, *the worship of God*. But can you think that worship in such a case can *be accepted by him*, who is no *respecter of persons?* Do you not by this very act make a public declaration, that God is not the Father of us all, and yet you call him Father in your prayers? Do you not carry bitter prejudices with you into the house of God; bitter and painful, on account of the distinction to the poor black people who are present, whereas, "when thou goest there, thou *shouldst be*

first reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," Matt. v. 24. Can you think that your worship will be accepted, nay, will be even noticed, except for *your own condemnation*, while you cherish such unchristian feelings in the heart? We worship God in the *true beauty of holiness*, when we see high and low, rich and poor, all on their knees together, and worshipping God without distinction of rank or station, as *if all were equal in his sight*. But we have reason to think, from the passage last quoted, (Matt v. 24.) that no worship will be agreeable to God, where the supplicant does not discard from his heart all enmity towards his brother.

Among other passages in the New Testament, which it would be well for you to attend to, take the following:—

I shall quote them, and this without any comment, leaving it to yourselves, to consider whether they are applicable or not to your present situation.

1. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator," Rom. i. 25.

2. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened," Rom. i. 21.

3. "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you," Rom. ii. 24.

4. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies," Matt. v. 43, 44.

5. "And the second (commandment) is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Matt. xxii. 39.

6. "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Matt. vi. 15.

I shall now, gentlemen, take my leave of you, and first I must ask you, if now, *after all the Scripture evidence* which has been adduced on this occasion, you *still* think that slavery *is not sinful*. Should you retain your old sentiments, I can only say, "neither will you be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Do you still think that slavery is *compatible* with *genuine piety?* So then is light compatible with darkness at the same moment, or hell with Heaven. It is an established fact, that slavery *hardens* the heart, *chokes up* the channels of sympathy, and creates *an indisposition to divine things*. Do you still say, that unless you *had a new revelation* from heaven, there is no necessity of changing your opinions and practice.—What! a *new revelation* from heaven *wanted*, to tell you that you are doing evil, in pursuing such a system *as slavery?* Have I not shown you that the *present revelation is sufficient, yes, more than sufficient*. Taking in its *direct* and indirect notices, all of which are applicable to you, there is no *one sin* mentioned in the Old or New Testament, of the *exceeding sinfulness*, of which *so much* has been said there, as of *slavery*, in the way in which it is practised by you. *It is sin* in its origin, *sin in its effects, sin* in all *its bearings, sin all over*. I do therefore hope for your own sakes, as well as for the sake of suffering humanity, that you will turn from your evil thoughts, and ways, and *repent*. I know, however, that repentance is not in your own power, but you may pray to God for his assistance in so good a work. His mercy endureth for ever. He is ever waiting to be gracious, and to receive those again into his flock, who will return to him with their whole heart. But, gentlemen, there is a fearful responsibility attached to your situation in particular, as ministers of the gospel. I believe it to be true, what I have heard from the mouths of so many American gentlemen, that if the clergy of the United States

would unite, and be firm in their advocacy of the great measure of emancipation, they would not plead in vain. Now I entreat you to lay this to heart. Consider, if this be the fact, *what an immensity of good* you may have the opportunity of doing, and *how much you may have to answer for*, if you neglect this call. The choice of good and evil is now before you, and you may either be the *instruments* of *promoting the glory* of God, or of *endangering your immortal souls.*

I would now address a few words to you, Wesleyan ministers in the United States, who disgrace your venerable founder by the part you take in slave-holding, as well as in defending slavery. Let me state to you John Wesley's sentiments on the subject as contained in a letter, *(the last letter which he probably ever wrote)* and on his dying bed, to the late Mr. Wilberforce, dated February 24, 1791, and which has been just published.

"My dear Sir,

Unless the Divine power has raised you up, to be as Athanasius contra mundum, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in oppoing that *execrable villany*, which is the *scandal of religion* of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of *men and devils*; but if God be for you, who can be against you. Are all of them together stronger then God? Oh, be not weary of well doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery, the *vilest that ever saw the sun*, shall vanish away before it. That He, who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this, and all things, is the prayer of

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

John Wesley.

TO THE

PLANTERS, SLAVE-HOLDERS

OF THE

SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING addressed the ministers of the gospel, among whom you reside, it is now my intention to say a few words to you *separately* on the *same* subject. And first I may observe, that whatever I have said to them, so far as I have hitherto proceeded, I consider myself to have been speaking equally to you. You stand in the same light in my eyes, as they do, I mean as *slave-holders*. If their conduct be worthy of reprobation, so will yours be also. If any arguments of mine, have shown it to be so, such arguments will show yours to be the same. There is, however, this difference between you and them, that whereas, *they* own but a few slaves, *you* are the owners of hundreds. *You* have, therefore, a more extensive power of doing good or evil, but *they* are the *more culpable*, because professing themselves to be ministers of the gospel of Christ, it is to be presumed, that they ought to have a better knowledge of the laws of morality and religion. Do not imagine by what I have just said, that you are *not culpable*—yes, you also *stand condemned*. It will only be to give *a very short summary* of what has been said, in the first part of this letter to show your guilt.

It has been proved there, that you have no equitable right to any of your slaves *as property*, whether they be

infants or adults, or whether they may be males or females. You hold them only by the law of force; and if you admit this to be the case, then you admit that any man has a right to rob and plunder you also at his discretion. It has appeared again, that you cannot carry on slavery *without a fearful responsibility to God*, for the depriving a man of his liberty by force and against his will, *is sin* of no ordinary magnitude. This is evident from our previous examination of the different sources of slavery among the ancients, which were supposed to be legal; and such a deprivation of human liberty is, moreover, acknowledged to be *a crime* of *the deepest dye* both by Moses and the apostle Paul.

It has been shown again, that according to your present practice, you break or violate no less than five out of the ten commandments, *or one half of the moral law*, and this not *once* or *twice* in your lives, but *almost every day you live*, so that crime is added to crime, till at length, a long catalogue of crimes will rise up against you at the day of final account. And you will remember, that, *however lightly* you may think of the moral law of Moses, as if he were *a legislator for the Jews only*, the apostle Paul tells you, that christianity coming in in after times, as it did, ratified or *established* this law, so that it is at this day as much the law of God, and *as much* to be *observed*, as it was in the Jewish times: and it may be worth while for you to remember also, in what light God himself viewed this law. He considered the breaking of *any one* of these commandments *to be sin*, and of so serious and momentous a nature, that he could not look over or forgive it, consistently with his infinite holiness, unless *expiation* were made for it. Nay, so heinous *was sin*, that is, a transgression of any one of these laws in his sight, that if a man transgressed even through *ignorance* or *unawares* he was made to *expiate for it*. "And

if a *soul* sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, though he wist it not, yet is he *guilty*, and shall bear his *iniquity*; and he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation, for a trespass-offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred, and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him," Levit. v. 17, 18. And here another observation may be made, which is, that Christ being come we have no ram now which can make expiation for us; the blood of bulls and of goats availeth not *now*: What then shall you do? I answer that the blood or sacrifice of Christ is offered you instead. But what then? Even this blood will not profit you, for the blood or sacrifice of Christ availeth not, unless you are sensible of your sin, and *walk in newness of life*. You must first repent, and *then give up the evil* which cries so loud against you. Gentlemen, I fear that, as you break five of these commandments almost every day you live, you have become so familiar with this violation of them, that you consider it as but of *little consequence*. I entreat you, therefore, to pause awhile and consider if you have any regard for your immortal souls. A little consideration will produce reflection, and reflection will, I hope, point out to you the dangerous situation in which you stand.

But you not only break the *moral law*, but you are by your daily practice, in *open rebellion* against the declarations and denunciations of *all the prophets of God*, who have opened their minds in cases similar to these in which you yourselves are concerned. There is no one custom, against which they cry more loudly, or denounce more frequent woes, than against the injustice of the man who employs his labourers and *defrauds them of their wages*.

And not only do you rebel by daily practice against the warnings of the prophets of God, who had *a commission from him* to preach, but against the commandments and warnings of *Jesus Christ*, and *all his apostles*, who have taught us what it is our duty to do, and what it is our duty to avoid. I will not enumerate here, as I have already done it, those particular things done on your part which on reading the New Testament we find pronounced to be sinful. But permit me to bring to your notice *one custom* prevalent with you, and this of almost every-day's notoriety; namely, the sale of human-beings, in which you have no regard to the tender ties of affection existing amongst them, but *separate man and wife*, to be sold, perhaps, to a great distance from each other, and never to see each other more. This custom, whether it prevail with you or others, Jesus Christ prohibits, and it is not among the least, I presume, of his charges against you, *that you reject his gospel.* You not only do not receive it practically yourselves, but trample it under foot, by your continued opposition to its precepts, and, besides this, very many of you actually *prohibit* it to your slaves, and thus deprive them of a revelation, which might afford them comfort under their heavy burdens, and, instead of being dead to religion, like stocks and stones, enable them to give glory to God, and ensure them their eternal happiness. Perhaps you never imagined before, that *such a rejection of the gospel* is a crime to be judged at the last day.

Again, it has been shown you that you are bound, in *consistency with your practice* as slave-holders, and to *preserve* the gospel of Christ *from pollution*, to compose and print a *new edition of the Bible.* The present edition can never be palatable to you, while it sets before you, page after page, your sins, and reproaches you with them. It is besides

utterly useless to you. It has not hitherto profited you, because it has wrought no change in your conduct towards your slaves. This new edition must be exclusively *your own*, and go forth in your *own* name, and in no other. We, who think differently from you on the great subject of religion, demand it of you as a right. We cannot allow you to go under the name of christians, or say that you derive your doctrines from the same fountain as we do, while you commit enormities so abhorrent from the christian profession.

Gentlemen, I own I am astonished, when I look at this short summary, to think that you should have gone on so long in such a course of depravity, without even feeling *that you had been doing wrong*. These acts on your part, which other people would consider as monstrously flagitious, have passed off with you as only *common occurrences*, and without having excited either *shame* or *remorse*. You have violated the precepts of the holy Scriptures, both in the spirit, and in the letter, with an inconceivable hardihood, and without sorrow or contrition, as if to *disobey God* was rather a duty than *to obey him*. This is the natural effect of slavery, that is, of the arbitrary power, which slavery confers on such a corrupt creature as man. It confounds his moral faculties, so that he has not, like other people, so clear a vision as to the discrimination between right and wrong ; else it would never have been said that "slavery was *no sin*," or that "*slavery was compatible* with *genuine piety*." Gentlemen, I do really pity you. It is not your own disposition, but wicked habits and customs, which have led you astray. Though I have felt it to be my duty to reprobate your conduct, I really feel for your awful situation. What is finally to become of you? I cannot think, from your practice, that *you have any belief of a*

future state—and, I say this, because you would not then act as you now do, and go on in the road to perdition. Let me entreat you to change your conduct. Yes, gentlemen, let me remind you that the soul of man is immortal. Let me endeavour to awaken you, and to argue with you on this point. One reason which induces me to suppose the soul to be immortal, is, the vast capacity and intelligence which it exhibits here upon earth. We cannot reconcile it to our understandings, that a being with such noble faculties and powers, should cease to exist, merely because so *vile* a thing as the body should be no more; nor do we see any necessity for its dissolution at the same time, when we reflect upon its *immaterial nature*. If it is *immaterial*, it cannot partake of the diseases of the body, nor does it *require the same food* for its support. Hence, we argue, that it by no means follows, that the soul loses its life, when the body moulders into dust.

Another reason which leads to the same opinion, is that almost all men have a *presentiment* of immortality, and some a longing after it, while the stings of conscience are often so powerful with others, as to produce the most painful solicitude about a future life. Now all these feelings are *natural*. Men feel them implanted in their nature, and they cannot, therefore, have been put there for no purpose.

A third argument in its favour, is taken from a consideration of the very cruel inequality observable in the apparent lots of men, in the present life. The world is full of injustice. One man cheats, robs, oppresses, and even murders another. The wicked man, in these cases, often escapes the vigilance of the laws, and thus goes out of the world unpunished. The injured man, again, often dies without obtaining the least redress. This unequal distribution of things in this life, can only be set right, by giving to

each man his due in another. Hence, the soul must continue to exist after death, that it may experience *this final adjustment of good and evil.*

But these, after all, are only reasonable conjectures upon reasonable premises. They afford no positive proof that the soul exists after death. It was reserved for Jesus Christ to bring immortality to light, upon evidence not to be disputed. Having come from *heaven*, where, being one with the Father, he was acquainted with all his designs, and the secrets and mysteries of the invisible world, he was *the only Being* that ever came upon our earth, who could give us *certain* information on this subject, and this information he has given us in the following words!—"Fear not them which kill the body, but are *unable to kill the soul;* but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell," Matt. x. 28. Luke xii. 4, 5. Here, then, we have the *strongest possible* proof of the immortality of the soul; for it appears that the soul does not die, *when the body dies; nor can it be destroyed.* Though the body may perish, or lose its life, yet *no human art or force*, not even death itself, as we find by our Saviour's account, *can annihilate* the soul.

I hope, gentlemen, that I have now shown you satisfactorily, that the soul is immortal. But, if it live after death, it must live in some place, and for some purpose. We are told by Jesus Christ and his apostles, that the good will be rewarded in another life, and the wicked punished, according to the deeds done in the flesh, whether they be good or evil; but neither of them has revealed to us, *wherein* these rewards or punishments consist. The former has represented to us the joys of heaven, by the terms, "paradise," or, "Abraham's bosom," and the pains of hell by "the gnawings of the worm which never dies," or,

"the fire of the valley of Hinnom." But we can collect nothing from these pictures with respect to *the nature* of these different destinies, but the certainty of the fact itself, that there will be a state hereafter, in which men will be either happy or miserable. Permit me then, to say, what there is reason to believe, will be the future situation of such as may be supposed to be consigned to eternal misery. There is reason to believe, that if a man is to be punished after death, his *soul* will be the sufferer, because the *soul* is to blame for the misdeeds done in the body. It was in the soul, that crime after crime was conceived before it was executed. But I beg of you, gentlemen, if this should be the case, not to think that this punishment will be *a light one*, because no man is able to *see the soul*, or because, the soul being *immaterial*, no one can conjecture in what manner an immaterial essence, abstracted from the body, is capable of being tortured. Yes, there are in the soul elements, which, according to the constitution of our nature, may be productive of the greatest possible suffering. The soul, in its present state, has its intellectual powers, its powers of perceiving, and judging, and reflecting. It has a certain consciousness. It has, besides, memory, and it has also, what is called conscience with its stings. Again, it has the power of self-condemnation, or remorse, and also an inward feeling of sorrow, disappointment, and shame. If, therefore, the soul is to live hereafter, it is to be presumed that it will retain and take with it, when it leaves this mortal body, its former faculties and powers. Let us, then, imagine a soul consigned to what is supposed to be hell. Behold it tortured day and night by the never ceasing prickings of conscience, on account of the deeds done in the flesh. And here, gentlemen, I am sorry to say, that of all the unhappy people, who go to this wretched place, your own

sufferings would probably be the most intense, unless you repent, because *vivid reminiscences of the cruelties inflicted upon your slaves* during your lives would for ever bring with them indescribable "gnawings." Besides, in addition to your agony, there would be the reflection, that you were in such a state of torment, on account of the *wrath of an offended God.* But is this all? No. There is another source of torment beyond either estimate or description. When the soul sees that it has *no means* of appeasing the anger of God of itself; that among the millions of spirits in the same prison, it *has*, and can have, *no helper*, or that what might *have been once* the means of its delivery, can be then of *no avail*, for that the Spirit of God, which might have saved it upon earth, is never said in the holy scriptures to visit this miserable place; and that the blood of Christ, which furnishes a fountain upon earth in which it might have been washed and cleansed, is no where said to flow in this recluse abode, it sees *no end* of its sufferings throughout eternity, and is, therefore, plunged into *new* and still more intolerable agonies,—*the agonies of endless despair.*

But, gentlemen, I will quit this frightful subject, and go to one that is more agreeable to your feelings, I mean to the consideration of your *temporal interests.* I will endeavour to explain to you, if you have a desire to abolish slavery in your land, the great advantages you may derive from such a measure, independently of the restoration of your character in the eyes of all good men. You are fearful, perhaps, of the consequences of such an abolition, and I have no fault to find with you on that account. But permit me to say, that I believe your fears to be groundless. The British nation have made an *experiment*, for the sake of justice, of an immediate and total abolition of slavery in their West India islands, as well as in their other colonies. This experiment has been on a sufficiently large

scale, to be called a fair and full experiment, and such as may be followed safely by other nations without hesitation, comprising no less than eight hundred thousand persons, men, women, and children. It has also stood the trial of two years and a half, a sufficient time to be considered as solid, and to be held forth as an example. Every account which has come from that quarter of the world to the mother country, within the last year, has been an improving one, (the last reports being more favourable than the preceding) as it respects the good morals, industry, sobriety, and good behaviour of the newly emancipated slaves, and of the thriving and prosperous condition of the planters, so that we hope that all the results which we expected from emancipation, will be more than realized in time.

I may now begin by stating, that the greatest difficulty which occurred in the experiment, and which occurred at the *very outset,* (and the same would occur with you in case of emancipation, but that you are now warned of it) was to know what would be a *fair pecuniary remuneration*, for the services of the free labourers per day, seeing that they had not been accustomed to wages, and what rent should be put upon their cottages and gardens, seeing that these had been hitherto rent-free. Several of their former masters, who were considered to be liberal men, and men of character, proposed terms, and these though reckoned low, were after a little hesitation, accepted by *many thousands* of the former slaves, who went to work for them cheerfully, and have continued in their employ with mutual satisfaction to the present time. Others offered terms too low and grinding to be accepted by any man, who had to maintain himself by his labour, and the consequence was, that their people left them, and went into the employment of those who paid them better. It has been observed by disinterested persons, who have visited our West India

islands, that *wherever* fair wages were offered, there was no want of labourers, but that on other estates, where the offers were mean and palpably unfair, the estates suffered in their cultivation. But these were but few. The question of rent and wages has not been yet quite settled, but as many of the planters have seen the folly of their conduct, they are coming into fairer terms, and it is believed, that it will not be long before this question will be finally adjusted. I may state here, that after an experiment of two years and a half, it has been fully established (a fact which ought to be written in letters of gold) THAT ONE ENFRANCHISED NEGRO DOES THE WORK OF TWO SLAVES.

Let us now look at the families of these labourers, their wives seldom or ever go into the field in the forenoon, during which time they attend to their domestic concerns. They set their houses in order, cook, wash, nurse, and take care of their children, whereas before, they were driven to the field by the whip at the dawn of day, and at the sound of the shell, with their infants at their backs. Their children, when of a certain age, instead of being urged to their work as before, are now sent to the different schools which have been established for their instruction, and are there taught to read and write, and are initiated in religious principles, in consequence of which education, they learn social order, respect to their superiors, and their duty to God and their neighbour, so that they are put in the way of *becoming useful members of society*. In consequence of the women and children absenting themselves from the field in the morning, as just described, and of the suspension of labour which took place, while the masters and men were disputing about rent and wages, it was supposed that there would be a great deficiency of labour, and of course a great diminution of produce, but owing to the men doing double the work they did before, no such anticipated evil has been discovered. The only

interruption that has been given to continuous labour is the misunderstanding before mentioned.

What is usually called in the West Indies the *dead weight* of an estate, has been removed, to the great pecuniary advantage of the planters. There was at times, as in the crop season, generally a paucity of labourers, even when the planters mustered all they could collect, but when this season was over, the planter had many more of them than he could employ, and remember that he was *obliged to maintain all these* supernumeraries. The case is now altered. He has at present as many hands, as he can employ, and *no more*. This forms an item of prodigious saving in his annual expenditure. The estate is now worked so much cheaper, on account of this dead weight being removed, (amounting, in some instances, to some hundreds a year) and on account of the low price of labour conjointly, so that though the produce of the land may be *much less* at times, by means of contingencies, the profits are still absolutely greater. To this may be added, a most important *consideration*, that estates are *rising in value* all over the island, and to an amount that is hardly credible.

But the change which has taken place in the civil and moral condition of the labourers, is, perhaps, the most wonderful, and to many the most pleasing, of all the effects produced by the abolition of slavery. With respect to marriage, which was before scarcely ever thought of, it is now esteemed honourable. Many thousands have required it to be solemnized as a religious ceremony, in *places of public worship*. In consequence of marriage prevailing amongst them, and the circumstance of the mothers having now more time to attend to the rearing of their infants, the population of the islands, which was lately on the *decrease*, is now increasing. Concubinage, so ruinous to their morals, *is fast wearing away*.

There is now a better understanding between the master or overseer, and his labourers; and the harshness and contempt which formerly characterized their intercourse, are now gradually subsiding. Even the prejudices of castes and colour are giving way.

The labourers and their families go regularly on the Sunday, and frequently on the evenings of other days of the week, to their respective places of worship. They express the most lively obligations to their pastors and teachers, for having thus brought them from a state of ignorance and darkness, to the light of the glorious gospel. For this cause, they grudge no expense in enlarging their places of worship. In one parish in Jamaica, consisting of about twenty thousand souls, there was lately contributed £1000 for these purposes, and in the same parish they contributed a considerable sum of money in addition, for a mission to their benighted relatives and countrymen in Africa, earnestly wishing them also to enjoy the same religious blessings as had been conferred upon themselves. Having received the good seed of God into their hearts, they give the best proof they can give of its blessed increase, by the consistency of their lives and behaviour. Wherever this divine seed has been planted, and taken root in their souls, for it cannot be supposed that it has, as yet, been more than generally distributed, from the want of sufficient pastors,* it has shown itself by its good fruit. It is a rare thing in several of the parishes to see a *drunkard*. Crime is *greatly diminished* among them, and several of the gaols are falling into decay, from having no inmates. In consequence of this their moral conduct, the masters or overseers and labourers, are drawn nearer together in *good will*. These are some, but not all the advantages, which

* Several new missionaries are now on their way to Jamaica to extend the knowledge of the word of God over the whole island.

have sprung from the experiment of British emancipation. To the emancipated slaves they are of a value, such as is not to be described; nor are they less a blessing to the British planter. He not only sees under him a contented, industrious, religious, and happy people, but he is besides for ever freed from the *fear of insurrection*, which formerly haunted him, and was a drawback from his happiness. How many distressing days, and how many sleepless nights, has this fear occasioned him in former times? Yes, he is no longer agitated by alarm. No negro vitally embued with gospel principles would ever rise against his master, nor would his pastor, who is embued with the same principles, allow him to do it, even were he so disposed, but would be the first to restrain him. And here allow me to say, that the negroes have such an unbounded love for their pastors on account of the religious blessings conferred upon them in making them "new creatures," that they (the pastors) can lead them which ever way they choose, of which a very important instance, to the credit of both, will be given in its proper place.

I have now, gentlemen, shown you by the experiment made by the people of England of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, how much your *temporal interests* would be improved by adopting the example. Most assuredly, the blessings, which the British planters have experienced, would be experienced by you also, if you were to tread in their steps. I see nothing to hinder this from being the case, for the same measures would probably produce the same results. Are they (the British planters) put into the way to increase their incomes—to pay off their mortgages, —and to see their estates rising in value, so would you also be put into the way to see the same? Have they been freed from the fear of the slaves attempting their liberty by *force* and *bloodshed*, so would you? I entreat you, then, to take

these things into your most serious consideration, with a view of effecting so inestimable a change. This would be a blessed opportunity, (which could occur *in no other way*) of securing both your *temporal and spiritual interests at the same time*. I have no doubt, that the Almighty would bless your endeavours for such a holy purpose, and may *He* of his infinite mercy, infuse his Holy Spirit into your hearts, and enlighten your understandings, to direct you to a right decision.

And now, gentlemen, what deters you from coming at once to this glorious decision; for there must be many among you, who are disposed to the abolition of slavery, if it could be properly effected? I will answer this question myself. It is not from a love of so hateful, and wicked a system as slavery, that you hesitate for a moment, but from a fear of consequences. My dear and valued friend, Mr. J. J. Gurney, had lately a conversation with Mr. Calhoun, a member of your Congress, in which that gentleman said, that there was a striking difference between the two countries, America and England, as to the practicability of the abolition of slavery, in point of *personal security*. We, the English, he said, had a large military force in our West Indies, by which we were able to protect the persons of the whites from outrages by the blacks, when their freedom was lately given them; whereas America had not troops to spare for such a purpose. Mr. Calhoun will permit me to say, without offence, that his argument addressed to Mr. Gurney was directly contrary to *reason*; for which of the two people would be the more likely to rebel, they, who have their *freedom granted to them*, (the greatest boon that can be conferred on man) or they, who are deprived of their liberty by force, whose minds are kept in a constant *disposition to revenge, and who only wait for an opportunity* of gratifying it. If soldiers are wanted, they are not

wanted to keep in order those who are in the possession of all their rights as free men, but to *keep in subjection* those, who have *been unjustly depriced of them*. And here let me observe, gentlemen, how unwise, how impolitic your conduct was (which you once thought to have been the perfection of policy and wisdom) when you resolved, that your slaves should *be kept in ignorance, that they should not be taught to read and write, and that they should know nothing of the blessed truths of the gospel.* Poor infatuated men, so does God blind the eyes, and harden the hearts of those, who by a course of wickedness, will rush headlong to perdition. Had you done your duty to your slaves, you would have educated them: you would not then have needed soldiers, as Mr. Calhoun intimated, *in case of emancipation:* you would have had sufficient protection in the *very education*, which *you refused them;* and I shall now show you this, and I hope to your satisfaction.

I will now, gentlemen, relate to you one of the most important facts that ever took place, for your instruction on the subject, about which, I am speaking, and I do implore you, for your future comfort and safety to attend to it. In the year 1832, happened what is called the great rebellion among the slaves in Jamaica. The whole of the white people there were in consternation from one end of the island to the other. The rebellion continued for weeks, and during that time some of them lost their lives, and the works upon several of the estates were burnt, and otherwise destroyed, yet there was a mercy, and a marked mercy, in the conduct of some of the rioters towards those masters and overseers, who had used their negroes well. Still the consternation continued, for the circumstance just mentioned, was not known till after the revolt had been put down. Now, remember the never to *be forgotten fact*, which I am now to lay before you. There were *many thousand*

slaves, I have heard them estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000 slaves, who *would take no part in the insurrection*, and many of these guarded their masters' property. Now, who were they who acted in this noble manner, forgetting the injuries they had from time to time received? They were the persons who had been *educated* and *instructed in the gospel of Christ*, at the different missionary stations. Not only, in many instances, the slaves themselves *refused to rise*, but the missionaries there were indefatigable in going among their flocks, to *persuade and exhort them* to abstain *from all outrage*, as *inconsistent* with *their new christian character*. I may mention here, as one among the other instances that might be related, that on the Oxford estate in Jamaica, the white population were so alarmed, that *every one of them* fled. At this moment Edward Barrett, a slave belonging to it, and who had been long *a deacon in the Baptist church at Falmouth*, and had drunk there of the waters of divine life from the true fountain, came forward and reasoned with his fellow-slaves, and had so much influence over them, as to *have kept them to their work for six weeks*, at the end of which, the white people returned, and found the property entire, as they had left it. For this conduct, the Assembly of Jamaica ordered him £10, and his master offered him his freedom, but as he was an elderly man, and had a son, who was a young one, he desired that the boon might be bestowed upon his son, and this was accordingly granted. Now I draw this inference from the above premises, namely, that your persons and property would *be safe in case of emancipation* in the United States, were *your* slaves *educated* and instructed in the principles of the Christian religion; that you would not only be *safe*, as far as the emancipated slaves themselves, but *doubly* so, wherever the missionaries were concerned. It is in the power of the missionaries, when they have once

got a hold upon the minds of the slaves, to *lead them as they please.* I repeat the words, "*to lead them as they please,*" and religious men, like the missionaries, would *never lead them into rebellion* against their former masters, or into the commission of any other evil.

And now, gentlemen, as it will take you sometime to investigate the subject thoroughly, before you can make up your minds to the immediate abolition of slavery, (for if slavery be a sin of such monstrous magnitude as I have described it to be, you ought to relinquish it at once) you ought not to lose a moment (to make amends for your past negligence) in inducing the different states to apply in a body to Congress, to get all *those laws repealed,* which forbid, or throw *any obstacle* in the way of the education of the slaves; for then, if Congress granted your request, the way would be laid open, not only for their literal instruction, but for their coming to a knowledge of the great truths of the christian religion. You should lose no time in discarding your present ministers; for men, who can see no evil in such a complication of crimes as slavery, who think slavery, with all its cruelties, compatible with genuine piety, and who want a new revelation from heaven, to instruct them in their duties on this great subject, can *know nothing,* as *they ought to know of the bible.* You should lose no time in opening a way for missionaries, so that they might have free access to your estates. Invite them to go there, and even live among your people. It would be well worth your while (you who have large properties) to pay them for services, which would be so beneficial to yourselves. Such payments need not continue long. The slaves themselves, when emancipated, would, in four or five years, most probably be able to maintain their own pastors. It is supposed, that the emancipated people in our West India islands, will soon make an offer

of supporting their own ministers, and thus take off a heavy burthen from those religious societies in the mother country, who have been at the expense of sending missions there.

And now, a few words to those individuals in the Northern States, who have mortgages on the slave-estates of the southern parts of the union. It has been long a matter of surprise to me, that among the virtuous people of the north, the slavery of the south should have found so many friends and supporters; that it should have been patronized, where it was lately detested; that ministers of the gospel should have risen up in favour of it; and that there should have been even *slave-mobs*, so contrary to the notions of the lower orders of the people, and particularly among Americans, who talk so much of the value of liberty. These things, I say, have been matters of surprise to me, and were so, till the secret was divulged to me, that there were many people in the north, who had mortgages on the slave-estates in the south. After this the mystery was unravelled. Every person who has such a mortgage, is *enlisted in the cause of slavery*, as much as the *slave-holder himself*. The estate is considered *as his own*, so long as his money lies upon it; and he has therefore an interest in slavery, and feels himself bound to defend it. Now every man who is so situated, has relatives, friends, and connections, of various sorts, whom he will try to influence, whenever the subject comes into discussion. Hence it happens, that the more people there are in the United States, who have mortgages on slave-lands, the more extensive will be the cry against, and the opposition to, the abolition of slavery. But let those, who have such mortgages, be told, that *the accomplice* is as bad as *the originator* himself, of robbery, or any other crime, in point of guilt.

He, who willingly, and of his own accord, lends his money to a slave-farm, with a knowledge of the cruelties practised on such farms, *wilfully upholds* that estate, and *all the crimes upon it*. Will not the all just God, judge him even as an acomplice at the last day?

P. S.—Since writing the above, I have received information from British India of the *new and extensive* cultivation going on there, of cotton, sugar, &c., but principally cotton, by which, I am sure, that the planters of the United States have *not a moment to lose* in enfranchising their slaves. They will soon have no market for their produce, and therefore ought to prepare themselves for the change, which can only be done by the employment of freemen, instead of slaves.

Private persons are hiring land of the East India Company to a great extent, and under long leases. One individual, it is said, has hired 60,000 acres at his own risk for cultivation, and expects to employ 100,000 people more than at present. Poor Texas (but she richly deserves the fate that awaits her) to have built the constitution of her government *on slavery*, when the East India Company and the private adventurers in India, now mentioned, will be able in a few years to make them emancipate all the slaves they have bought, or have an incumbrance left upon their lands, which will take away all profits from cultivation. To this, may be added, the consideration, that when the Niger expedition, which is just on the point of sailing, returns, measures will be immediately taken for the cultivation of cotton, rice, sugar, tobacco, &c., in Africa, on a very large scale. Of the first of these articles, viz., cotton, I have beautiful specimens in my possession.

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